



### THE BRITISH NAVY IN DIFFICULTIES.

Sailor. "AHOT THERE! GET OUT YOUR COLLISION MATS! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S GOING TO RAM?"

#### HAMLET, PRINCE OF BRUISERS.

[MR. JAMES J. CORBETT has intimated his intention of appearing as *Hamlet* on an early date. He defines his conception of the part with the statement that he has always felt sure that *Hamlet* "was a man who had a good, straight punch."]

AUTHORITIES may still contest

The pros and cons of *Hamlet's* madness—  
Whether grief occupied his breast,  
And nothing more than chronic sadness  
Produced those antics of the brain  
(Discords in music else euphonious)  
Which mystified the Chamberlain,  
The sage, but flatulent *Polonius*.

But now there swims into the ken  
Of critics, in their narrow orbit,  
That king of talkee-fightee men  
Known to the world as JAMES J. CORBETT,  
Raising a more important point,  
Than those of scholarship abstruser—  
When times were badly out of joint  
Was *Hamlet* an accomplished bruiser?

JEM finds the Dane was not a prig,  
Nor coward, who invites our stricture;  
He made, when peeled to fighting rig,  
A pretty pugilistic picture;  
He had a most convincing punch; <sup>1</sup>  
When trained, he was the best of stayers;  
And showed as elegant a bunch  
Of fives, as SULLIVAN or SAYERS.

We know he saw—he tells us this  
In language unadorned but fervent—  
A Providence that never is  
Of falling sparrers unobservant;

It went against the grain to stab  
*Laertes* with a pointed whinger—  
He would have much preferred to jab  
Upon the "mark" a well-timed stinger.

The end he looked for (see Act V.),  
The climax that he longed for dearly,  
Was to keep *Claudius* alive,  
But maul his relative severely;  
To pick him up, and knock him down,  
Until he tendered resignation,  
And eagerly exchanged his crown  
For raw beef-steak and embrocation.

So all whom it revolts to see  
So many players stark and bleeding,  
When falls the curtain finally,  
Will welcome this humaner reading;  
When Mr. CORBETT takes the part,  
Horrors that now from callous eyes wring  
Moisture and melt the toughest heart  
Will change to graces of the Prize Ring.

#### Russia at Sea and Russia at Home.

A CONTRAST.

*At Sea.*—"The chief feature of the stay of the Baltic Fleet at Nossi Bé has been a rise of no less than 70 per cent. in the price of champagne in Madagascar."

*At Home.*—The old Sobor Parliament will probably be summoned early in March.

*First Reveller (on the following morning).* "I say, is it true you were the only sober man last night?"

*Second Reveller.* "Of course not!"

*First Reveller.* "Who was, then?"

### "ADMIRALS ALL."

(With acknowledgments to Mr. Henry Neubolt.)

[At the time of writing these lines, their author, like the Government, is without official and detailed information as to the conclusions of the North Sea Court of Inquiry. According to a *Reuter* telegram of the 23rd from St. Petersburg the Report finds that Admiral ROZHDESTVENSKY fired on the *Aurora*, and was "justified" in so doing. The following verses take no account of the British and American Representatives. It is assumed that they had no share in the composition of the more humorous sections of the Report. The chief authorship of that document is attributed to the Austrian Admiral.]

FOURNIER, SPAUN and DUBASOFF,  
Judges of proved *esprit*!  
Lift we the wassail-bowl and quaff  
Health to the peerless Three!  
Laughter loud as the winds that blow  
Greets them on Europe's lips,  
Good to be heard while men shall go  
Down to the sea in ships.

*Admirals all, of proved esprit!*  
*Honour and fair renown*  
*Are due to the whole amazing Three,*  
*But specially due to SPAUN.*

Never a seaman worth his salt  
But could, with a half-shut eye,  
Easily fix the damning fault  
In the place where it ought to lie;  
One thing only was left in doubt—  
Whether the crews were drunk,  
Or let their moderate wits run out  
Owing to abject funk.

Even at night they must have known  
The North from the Yellow Sea,  
And might have managed to grasp their own  
Vessel's identity;  
And if the Inquisitors, too discreet,  
Said nothing of drink or scare,  
At least they could point to Togo's fleet  
As being engaged elsewhere.

Well, have they solved the nautical knot  
And labelled the phantom bark—  
Whence and whither it steered and what  
It was doing there in the dark?  
Yes, its name is as clear as Day,  
But Russia was surely right  
In the peculiar circs., they say,  
To go for the same at sight.

This they assert, but fail to tell  
Who is the man to blame  
If the major amount of shot and shell  
Went wide of its so-called aim;  
Here is a mystery closely hid,  
But they find, these men in blue,  
That the thing that ROZHDESTVENSKY did  
Was a sailorly thing to do.

Admirals all, they have said their say,  
And the Babel of tongues is still;  
Admirals all, they have gone their way,  
Leaving us half the bill;  
But they leave us also a gift that atones  
(Hail to the humorous Three!)  
A gift of laughter to rack the bones  
Of our horse-marines to be.

*Admirals all, of proved esprit!*  
*Honour and fair renown*  
*Are due to the whole amazing Three,*  
*But specially due to SPAUN.*

O. S.

### THE NEW ENGLISH.

WE are delighted to be able to state that the excellent example set by the French Government will shortly be followed by our own, and that an exhaustive set of rules for simplifying and beautifying the English language, framed by a specially selected committee of three leading journalists, viz., SIR OLIVER LODGE, MR. HAROLD BEBBIE and the Editor of the *Tailor and Cutter*, will shortly be issued and enforced on all classes of the community.

It had been hoped that universal acquiescence in the new scheme would have rendered compulsion unnecessary. Unfortunately a small band of reactionaries and obscurantists, headed by some incompetent pedagogues, have issued a manifesto of protest, and the measure of support which they have secured has left the Government no other alternative. Full details of the recommendations of the Committee are not yet forthcoming, but it is generally understood that the use of a large number of specified neologisms, free spelling, and split infinitives are cardinal features in this great scheme of emancipation.

From the mass of correspondence which has reached us on the subject we have made the following selection:—

MR. ALFRED AUSTIN writes from Malvoisie Manor:—"I have great confidence in the taste and sagacity of the Committee of Three, and their resolve to encourage free spelling is a convincing proof of their fitness for the task. The principle that spelling is to be modelled on the spoken word is essential to the success of the scheme, and will be welcomed by all true poets with enthusiasm. Free spelling enormously widens the range of rhyme, and since the announcement of the new departure I have found the divine *afflatus* in my own case has immensely increased in volume and velocity. This morning no fewer than three lyrics flew out of my Heliconian fountain pen."

MR. CHARLES HANDS writes from St. Petersburg:—"Let us not palter with pedantry. Hoof out the fly-blown fetish of correctitude. What we want is not an anæmic vocabulary and a crippling syntax, but a full-blooded diction, teeming with splurge and vim. England will never really buck up until she learns to express herself in a crisp but lurid lingo, in which the charming compounds of pigeon-English from the Transvaal, the vivid phrases of the Sydney larrikin, and the argot of Mayfair all find their proper place."

MR. HARRY FREDERICKSON writes:—"The notion of reorganising our language appeals to me strongly as a revolutionary historian. I trust, however, that the claims of Byzantinism will not be overlooked, and that in the new vocabulary room will be found for some of the choicer gems of speech invented and patented by my friend MR. MAURICE HEWLETT."

MR. C. ARTHUR PEARSON writes:—"Language to be efficient should be at once terse and luscious. No long sentences. But plenty of purple patches. It must reproduce all the best qualities of brainy chat, and grip the reader with red-hot similes and juicy adjectives."

SIR HENRY HOWORTH writes:—"If the scheme, as I make no doubt it will, enriches the vocabulary of polemics, it will have my most cordial support. We are sorely in need of new epithets to render adequate justice to the treacherous fatuity of the Free-fooders."

MR. PERCY FITZGERALD writes:—"Allow me to prefer a modest plea on behalf of enlarging the bounds of our speech. Some of the critics of my last work—the nine hundred and seventy-third volume which I have written—have fallen foul of me for alluding to 'a Highland chieftain or catamaran.' They say that the word should be 'cateran.' Surely this is pedantry run mad. The insertion of an extra syllable not only renders the word much more euphonious, but lends it a truly Scotch or at any rate sub-Alpine flavour."



### FIRST ADVANCES.

RUSSIAN BEAR (tentatively). "AHEM!"







### SWEEPING ASSERTION.

"THE OTHER NIGHT, AT THE NOVELTY THEATRE, MRS. VERE-JONES WAS GOWNED SIMPLY IN A CLINGING BLACK VELVET, WITH A CLOAK OF SAME HANDSOMELY TRIMMED WITH ERMINE."—*Extract from Society Journal.*

### MORE "WELSH LIGHTS."

DEAR SIR,—Permit me to say, for the benefit of those who are interested in the unaccountable luminous visitations in Wales, that the phenomena are by no means peculiar to that country, but may be seen, under favourable conditions, from any English highway. In proof of my assertion I submit the following remarkable results of my own investigations, which were carried out not fifteen miles from town.

About 10.30 on the night of the twenty-fourth ultimo I started out on foot, armed with my camera, and found the country-side covered with mist. After pursuing my investigations for several hours without result, I was about to seek my couch when there suddenly appeared before me a hundred yards ahead a lambent ball of blood-red light. The apparition was some fifty feet from

the ground, and maintained an almost stationary position above the trees of a small coppice.

Hastening to the spot I found the haze was too thick to allow a successful photograph to be taken, but fortunately I discovered a substantial pole near at hand up which I shinned without loss of time, until I found myself almost in touching distance of the mysterious luminary. Indeed I was just stretching out my hand to do so when it changed to a lambent green colour, and I was conscious of a sharp concussion on the head which necessitated my descending the pole with considerable agility.

I regret to say that on reaching the ground I nearly met with an accident in which a locomotive was involved, but luckily escaped with the loss of my umbrella and hand-camera.

When next evening I started out on

my bicycle I was pleased to find the night was clear, although I hardly hoped to meet with success on two consecutive nights. However, I had not ridden half a mile before I became aware of two globes of white fire about three feet from the surface of the ground at no great distance from me. Hastily extinguishing my lamp I quickened my pace, but far from eluding my pursuit they seemed to court inquiry, increasing in size momentarily until I was only a few yards distant. Suddenly I was conscious of a terrific impact, an unpleasant odour and a loud tumult of sound, and remembered nothing more for a considerable period.

Although at present in the doctor's hands, I intend to continue my investigations next week, when I expect to bring them to a satisfactory conclusion.

Yours truly,

PRACTICAL INQUIRER.

## VER!

THERE'S something beating in my breast that tells me it is spring-time;

My cardiac pulses prophesy the presence of the ring-time;  
Now maidens doff their backwardness and all the lads get bolder,

And everybody's looking young and nobody feels older.  
The thrushes and the blackbirds sing; the sparrows chirrup madly;

The crocuses are popping out, and don't pop out so badly;  
And, yielding to the vernal warmth, the angler is reduced to  
The catching of a smaller cold than lately he was used to.

Our Parliament has met again—it seems to be unending—  
And ARTHUR, that engaging child, is playing at pretending.  
JOE CHAMBERLAIN, the firework fiend, is spent like any rocket,  
And finds himself, a fiscal stick, secure in ARTHUR'S pocket.  
Now WYNDHAM, looking black and blue and turning on his teaser,

Defends himself from ANTONY and tries to play the CÆSAR;  
And every merry Radical, whose nerves grow daily tenser,  
Is suffering from hope deferred, and throwing stones at SPENCER.

Now sixteen Undergraduates of Cam and eke of Isis  
Abandon cake and cream and tart and everything that nice is.  
They spare their words and spend their winds, and though  
their seats are slidey,

Their minds are firm; their oars are spruce, and soon their  
pace gets tidy.

Their luxuries might be described as something less than  
little;

Their meat is tough, their bites are strong (although their  
barks are brittle);

And every day they take their oars and either row or paddle,  
While someone scares them into fits a-cursing from the saddle.

The Cantabs change their river now, and off they go to Ely;  
And now and then they change their sides (like CHURCHILL,  
GUEST and SEELY).

Their Coach is most severe with them: as soon as WAUCHOPE  
woke up

The echoes of the sluggish Ouse they went and kept the  
stroke up.

*Sans peur et sans reproche* they are—each one a modern  
BAYARD;

And, not yet having got their blues, the cunning beggars try  
hard;

And critics who come down to see say, "This will be a fast  
year:

Already they are better far, we're sure of it, than last year."

At Oxford, too, they've got an Eight that's always going  
better,

And though they've turned her inside out they've never yet  
upset her.

Oh, much I should rejoice to watch the very far from still lips  
Of one who rides and teaches them, their mentor, Mr. PHILIPS.  
He tells them all about the stroke, how finished, how begun  
too;

He likes to see a thing well done and gets the men well done  
too;

And when they've had their fill of work, and every one  
looks thinner,

He lets them down and feeds them up and fills them full of  
dinner.

In short, in saying "Spring is here!" I'm sure I shan't be  
tripping;

The mint-and-saucy little lambs are practising their skipping;

In dreams I see the waving corn and catch the farmers grum-  
bling;

The bumble-bee appears again and starts upon his bumbling.  
My soul leaps up like anything; unless my sight grows  
dimmer,

I ought to see on every twig a viridescent shimmer.

Come, Ver, declare yourself aloud; no longer be a hinter;  
And—what the deuce! A fall of snow? By Jove, we're  
back in winter!  
Tis.

## AT THE ST. JAMES'S.

LUCKY for Mr. SUTRO that his reputation as a dramatist is, for the present at all events, firmly perched on the *Walls of Jericho*, for certainly it would never have attained that elevated position had it depended either on the "curtain raiser" entitled *A Maker of Men*, or on the "New and Original Comedy" in three Acts entitled *Mollentrave on Women*, now being performed at the St. James's Theatre.

In both pieces—the first is only a bit of a piece—the acting is excellent. Too great praise cannot be given to Miss EDITH OLIVE in the aforesaid "curtain-raiser" for her rendering of the loving and plucky wife. Had Mr. SUTRO been well advised he would have kept this snippet of an Act, a mere memorandum for a scene in a play, safe in his own desk until such time as he should see his way either to developing it or to fitting it into a carefully planned, interesting three-act drama or comedy. As it is, for the sake of making the female character worth the attention of a good actress, he has given her soliloquies written in a theatrical style that might have been acceptable to audiences that dearly loved their BULWER LYTTON, and admired their SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

As for *Mollentrave on Women*, described as "a new and original comedy," it differs but little from a three-act farce. Its plot turns upon the utter improbability of a sort of superior *Mr. Micawber*, overpoweringly impressed by his own cleverness, absolutely omitting all mention of the name of the young man whom he wishes a certain young lady to marry, when talking, impressively, on this very subject, to the girl herself! Nay, more, Mr. SUTRO places a sharp-witted barrister, an experienced King's Counsel, in the room, as witness of this interview, and never allows this clever lawyer to interfere and say, "My dear *Mollentrave*, excuse me, but you have omitted to mention your client's name." The whole thing is too preposterous, but, granted the absurdity of the root idea, it must be conceded that, except in this crucial instance, the dialogue is natural, though not particularly sparkling, and that the characters, especially that of the child-like and bland *Mollentrave*, are as amusing as those in an "entertainment."

Mr. ERIC LEWIS, in this eccentric part of *Mollentrave* which is a compound of *Micawber*, *Mr. Dick* and *Harold Skimpole*, is admirable. The character could not have found a better representative. His light touch-and-go comedy is deliciously exhilarating, and it would not surprise the audience were he suddenly to burst into song. By the way he does, once, dance; and this the House intensely appreciates. In the Third Act there is a charming "set" by Mr. WALTER HANN representing "the garden of *Mr. Mollentrave's* house at Swanage," where the stage is carpeted with a heavy, mossy seaweedy sort of grass, which, on the night when we had the good fortune to be present, not having been kept neatly trimmed, impeded the progress of the actors by almost tripping up Miss MARION TERRY (the delightful representative of *Lady Claude Derenham*) and forcing Mr. ERIC LEWIS, as his feet got entangled in the weeds, to exclaim in a tone of genuine annoyance, "I really must get this grass cut." No line in the play so took the fancy of the audience as did this. It caught on at once, and literally brought down the house. For quite forty-five seconds Mr. LEWIS and Miss TERRY were

condemned to silence, and, while facing one another, they had to do considerable violence to their feelings in order to preserve their gravity, while boxes, stalls, pit, and gallery, entering thoroughly into the spirit of the thing, applauded enthusiastically. It was the hit of the evening. Not a line of the author's obtained such instant recognition as this impromptu so naturally uttered by Mr. LEWIS.

The excellence of the acting may carry the piece, and indeed it needs carrying, as the chances of its running seem to me somewhat problematical. Mr. NORMAN MCKINNEL gives a clever portrait of the *Sir Joseph Balsted, K.C., M.P.*, as imagined by Mr. SUTRO. Mr. LESLIE FABER is quite the boyish *Everard Suenboys*, and great praise was on this particular night due to Miss HYLDON FRANKLYN, who at short notice took the very responsible part of *Margaret Messilent*, the silly-girle ward of the victimised King's Counsel.

Mr. SUTRO seems to lack that quality which is recognised as an infinite capacity for taking pains. He hits upon a capital eccentric character, quite Dickensian, and then, having apparently so exhausted himself with this effort as to be quite unable to invent a good comedy plot in which this eccentric character shall find his proper place, he knocks together, "constructs" is not the word, some old farcical materials as the *entourage* for this absurd individual. Pity that Mr. SUTRO should have ventured beyond the *Walls of Jericho*. Let him return to Jericho and await the arrival of another brilliant idea. *En attendant* he may study the art of dramatic construction.

#### A GOLFER'S TRAGEDY.

PERHAPS a golfing reader, *Mr. Punch*, may like to treat For a set of clubs, all warranted, enclosed in bag complete?

Not long ago I should have scorned as palpably absurd  
The thought of the catastrophe which actually occurred;  
Not long ago—the very recollection makes me weep!—  
I never thought to see my whole equipment going cheap!

I loved the game; I did indeed! I revelled in a match;  
My handicap, I grant you, was a good bit over scratch,  
Yet now and then my Haskell, hit superlatively clean,  
Would fairly fizzle from the tee and land upon the green.

One day—a black, a dreadful day—be calm, O breaking heart!

I chanced to read an article about the golfing art,  
With views by a photographer—yes, BELDAM was his name;  
I'd like a transposition in the spelling of the same.

The pictures, as I gathered, were intended to display  
The perils that beset the mere beginner on his way;  
Upon a sort of chess-board stood a golfer, who combined  
Each error, great and little, that can overtake mankind.

And, as I gazed, quite suddenly I recognised the fact,  
Each picture was a portrait, unmistakably exact!  
Here were the modes depicted of how *not* to hit the ball,  
Here were the golfer's vices—and I'd simply got them all!

Thereafter I was haunted, as I drove from every tee,  
By visions of the awful sins exemplified by me;  
My stance was wrong, my swing was wrong, my grip was  
wrong also,

And never, never after could I make my Haskell go!

I tried to change my habits, and I hardly need explain  
To any golfing reader that the effort was in vain;  
Reverting to my former ways, the consciousness of vice  
Made every shot a fizzle, or a melancholy slice!

So that's the reason, *Mr. Punch*, I sob aloud and weep,  
And that is why I'll sell my clubs, ridiculously cheap!



#### APPEARANCES ARE SOMETIMES DECEPTIVE.

*Inquisitive Boy.* "CAUGHT ANYTHING, MISTER?"

*Angler.* "No."

*Inquisitive Boy.* "DO YER EXPECT TO?"

*Angler.* "CAN'T SAY." (Pause.)

*Inquisitive Boy.* "WHAT ARE YER FISHING FOR?"

*Angler* (becoming annoyed and trying to be sarcastic). "FUN!"

#### NEW RULES FOR "PIT."

[On the authority of the Athenæum Club.]

(1) The table shall be firmly clamped to the ground, and the cards shall be of metal not less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick, with rounded corners.

(2) Any player who speaks in such an audible voice that the position of the roof is altered shall be forced to make the damage good.

(3) No player shall use a megaphone or speaking-trumpet of any kind.

(4) Muffin-bells may only be employed by players who have formed a "corner," and desire to communicate this fact to other players.

(5) If a player has called "corner," and is found to have only eight similar cards in his hand, the game shall be continued without him. His remains may be removed at leisure.

(6) "Progressive Pit" with more than four tables shall only be played in a house which is at least five miles in any direction from other inhabited buildings.

(7) No person who is not a player shall approach while a game is in progress, except in the case when a player faints across the table and so obstructs the play.



### MUSICAL FISH.

Being a postscript to an article on "The Sense and Sensibility of Fish," in the "Outlook."

THAT fish can hear has been abundantly proved. The following story, told by MATTHIAS DUNN of Mevagissey, is in itself testimony of the best. "The crew of one of the pilchard-boats lay becalmed one evening some miles from the coast, and, as time hung heavy on their hands, sang in chorus one of the chapel hymns, of which they know so many since the days when WESLEY preached through the Duchy. The response came in the shape of an almost miraculous draught, for thousands of pilchards, mesmerised, as it were, by the unison of deep voices floating on the waters, gathered round the boat and were taken in the nets at the first cast."

It is probable that fish are now wiser, recognising that what is gospel to man is death to themselves. But the fact remains that fish can hear and appreciate music. On a dark evening it is well known to every constable in the vicinity that the fish leave the Serpentine in great numbers and come flopping across the grass towards the Albert Hall in order to listen to the TORREY-ALEXANDER choir. There are also instances of Thames fish climbing the Terrace of the House of Commons to listen to the harmony of an Irish night debate. But there is no record of their having taken to de bate themselves—thus differing from the unhappy pilchards.

But fish not only can hear music intelligently; they also make it. Deep-sea concerts are very common, and divers bring back wonderful tales of their top notes. Indeed the derivation of the word *dica* is perhaps to be found here by the sufficiently learned. We may add that Professor ROLLICKER, when working at the Naples Aquarium, once provided himself with a diving costume, the helmet of which was fitted with special sound-receivers, and found that, standing at the bottom of the Mediterranean in that lovely bay that mirrors fiery Vesuvius and the low white roofs of Sorrento, he could with a little practice not only distinguish several kinds of fish by their voices, but thoroughly enjoy the artistic programmes of vocal and instrumental music which were kindly performed for his benefit by subaqueous minstrels.

But while certain musical qualities are common to all members of the finny tribe—e.g. brilliancy in their scales—there is a marked divergence in the proficiency and tastes of the various species. The voice of the turtle has for three thousand years at least excited the admiration of all hearers by its soft and

soothing tones. Accuracy of intonation is a remarkably constant feature amongst submarine vocalists, though it has been noticed that flounders are occasionally apt to get rather flat. Bass, as their name implies, have generally low-pitched voices, and Professor RAY LANKESTER in one of his masterly monographs has dwelt on the curious partiality displayed by large eels for congregational singing. The sardine has a voice of a singularly soft and rather oily timbre, which has given rise to the familiar indication *con Sardini*. The dragonet (the *draunculus* of Rondeletius) gave its name to DRAGONETTI the famous double-bass player, and Sir FREDERICK BRIDGE, the distinguished organist of Westminster Abbey, has left it on record that the command of the pedals enjoyed by a well-trained octopus easily surpasses that possessed by any human performer. MATTHIAS DUNN, himself a fine performer on the concertina, was of opinion that when the ringed seal makes a bee-line for home, bearing a plump cod to her young ones, she hums as she goes. On this point, however, there is a conflict of evidence. Professor ROLLICKER's observations of the seals which haunt the Neapolitan icebergs leading him to a somewhat different conclusion. They are however quite unanimous in holding that no matter how highly developed a fish's taste in concerted vocal music may be you will never find it appreciates a "catch."

### EXCUSES AD LIBITUM.

THE *Daily Chronicle* of February 23 and the *Globe* have decided that "Sorry" is the ideal form of apology. We venture to think that it does not meet all possible cases; and the temporarily contrite, therefore, are recommended to refer to the subjoined list.

From Admiral of Fishing Fleet to panic-stricken Russian Commander, on being attacked and sunk by the latter:—"We are simply overwhelmed at the idea of causing you groundless alarm. Pray let us defray all damages you may have inflicted."

From Nationalist M.P., on calling Cabinet Minister a liar:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, I regret to say that what I implied in connection with the Right Honourable Gentleman was the reverse of the truth."

From Indiscriminate New-Comer, on disturbing the extremities of a bus-load of people:—"It's of no corn-sequence, I assure you!"

From Fickle Swain to Lady-love whom he has jilted:—"Pray don't mention it (to your solicitors)."

From Inadvertent Gentleman, on precipitating contents of tea-cup over front of Lady's dress: "There's many a slip

'twixt the cup and the lap," or, "Excuse my odd little *lapses*!"

From Absent-minded Barber, on gashing the chin of Passive Resister: "My mistake!"

From Over-energetic Partner to Dêbutante, on tearing her ball-dress: "Dear me, have you 'got the needle?' I haven't."

Other specimens of cheery apology may be easily constructed on similar lines for undefeated offenders at golf, Bridge, dinner parties and mothers' meetings, for whom the ejaculation "Sorry" is too staccato.

### THE EUPHEMISTIC AGE.

[Lord HUGH CECIL, by his story of the "gentleman's anatomical belt," designed "to shape the male figure into a superelegant tenuity," has called attention to our "custom of using names because they are polite and pleasing, and not because they are accurate."]

Time was we Britons all displayed

A frank and brutal candour;  
We used to call a spade a spade,

But now we're growing blander.  
If Truth be nude, we think it rude  
To turn our glances on her:

We dare not look till we can hook  
Some decent clothes upon her.

When nightly, as we sit at meat

Around the groaning table,

We over-drink and over-eat  
As long as we are able,  
'Tis not from greed we love to feed,

And swinish inclination—  
Alackaday! we are a prey  
To "social obligation."

When ladies seek masseuses' skill

To rub away Time's traces,  
And sleep (as I am told they will)

With masks upon their faces;  
When they repose with peg on nose  
To mould it into beauty—

Good friend, refrain! Don't call them  
vain!  
They are the "slaves of duty."

When City men conspire with Earls

To tempt untutored boobies  
By talk of valleys filled with pearls  
And diamonds and rubies;

When they invite the widow's mite  
To set their ventures floating—  
It's swindling? No! by no means so!  
It's "company-promoting."

When public gentlemen address

Small cheques to institutions,  
And little pars to half the Press  
About their contributions—

You hint they're glad to get an "ad."  
And easy popularity?

That's not their game! They have one  
aim—  
"Disinterested charity."



## CHARIVARIA.

GENERAL GRIPENBERG declares that KUROPATKIN robbed him of a victory. Never mind: the Japanese have been playing KUROPATKIN the same scurvy trick.

But, speaking seriously, it seems hard that the one success which the Russians would have won (provided, of course, that they had not been defeated) should have miscarried owing to a misunderstanding.

The *Express* raises a scare of "Useless bulkheads on British vessels." We would rather have these than the useless blockheads from which a certain foreign Navy suffers.

A naval volunteer corps is to be started in Cape Colony, and the Admiralty has been asked for the use of an obsolete war ship. We understand that an appeal to the War Office for some obsolete guns was met with the reply that they were all still in use.

Count STERNBERG, who served against us in the Boer War, has been fighting his battles over again. Last week, in Vienna, he struck an elderly journalist on the back of the head, and then ran away.

We understand that the King of SPAIN has not yet arrived at a decision in the choice of a bride, and will still be happy to receive suggestions from our half-penny papers.

It is rumoured that the recent case against the "Emperor of the SAHARA" was assigned to Mr. Justice DARLING, at his Lordship's special request, "as it gave him such a chance."

It is also stated that in future, in dealing with minor offences, Mr. PLOWDEN will give his prisoners the option of "Forty shillings or a joke."

Mr. JAMES BERRY, the ex-hangman, in speaking of his old occupation, declared, "It injures you: it breaks you. Indeed it seems to do for a man altogether." People on whom he has operated would, we are sure, corroborate this view.

A young girl, while leaning out of a window, last week, in the Avenue de la République, Paris, fell through the awning of the café below on to the heads of the startled customers. "She escaped," the report says, "with a few scratches." Some people would have done more than this to the intruder.

Two silver tea-pots were found, the other day, in the nosebag of a donkey



## FORCE OF HABIT.

*Lady.* "POOR MAN! HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN OUT OF WORK?"

*Absent-minded Beggar (usually blind, at present working the "unemployed" business).* "I WAS BORN THAT WAY, MUM."

belonging to a Newington coster. The coster, however, was sent to prison for stealing them. The attempt to foist the guilt on the quadruped was as cowardly as it was impotent.

The War Office authorities consider that too much fuss is being made about what is, after all, a very little rifle.

"Dear little rifles for dear little recruits" are what they claim, with some justice, to be supplying.

It is a pleasure at last to find Sir HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN agreeing with another Liberal Leader, anyhow as to one point. Lord SPENCER, in reply

to the expression of a hope that he might be the next Premier, has stated, "I cannot believe I shall be called to such a high post."

To the great annoyance of the officers and men of the Third Baltic Squadron, news of the decision of the Paris Tribunal only reached them after they had passed the Dogger Bank, when it was too late for them to have a few shots at our fishing fleet.

Continuing its scheme for having our national games reported by those who take part in them, the *Daily Mail's* Parliamentary article is now written by an M.P.



### LIFE'S LITTLE IRONIES.

*Motorist.* "CONDUCTOR! HOW CAN I STRIKE THE HARROW ROAD?"

*Conductor.* "'ARRER ROAD? LET'S SEE. SECOND TO RIGHT, THIRD TO—IT'S A GOOD WAY, SIR. I TELL 'EE, SIR. JUST FOLLOW THAT GREEN BUS OVER THERE; THAT'LL TAKE YOU RIGHT TO IT!"

### WAKE UP, ENGLAND!

["British lady motor-drivers," says *Motoring Illustrated*, "must look to their laurels. Miss ROSAMUND DIXEY, of Boston, U.S.A., invariably has her sweet, pet, fat, white pig sitting up beside her in the front of her motor-car."]

We are losing our great reputation,  
Our women are not up-to-date;  
For a younger, more go-a-head nation  
Has beaten us badly of late;  
Is there nowhere some fair Englishwoman  
Who'd think it not too *infra dig*.  
To be seen with (and treat it as human)  
A sweet—pet—fat—white—pig?

There is no need to copy our Cousins,  
A visit or two to the Zoo  
Will convince you there must be some dozens  
Of animal pets that would do.  
With a "grizzly" perched up in your motor,  
Just think how the people would stare,  
Saying, "Is that a man in a coat or  
A big—grey—tame—he—bear?"

Think how *chic* it would look in the paper  
(*Society's Doings*, we'll say),  
"Mrs. SO-AND-SO drove with her Tapir,  
And daughter (the Tapir's) to-day.  
Mrs. THINGUMMY too and her sister  
Drove out for an hour and a half,  
And beside them (the image of Mr.)  
A dear—wee—pink—pet—calf!"

### AWFUL OUTLOOK FOR THE SMART SET.

["A weary lot is in store for feminine *Falstaffs*, for the fiat has gone forth that hips are to be abolished."—*The Gentleman*.]

DIGITT AND POLLEX, of Cork Street, are now showing two positively sweet lines in suede and kid thumbless gloves, designed to meet the present craze for amputating the first finger.—*The Well-Gowned Woman*.

The Countess of ORRELY was amongst those of the most exclusive set who appeared at the play last night wearing the left ear only. This attractive fashion has caught on in the most wonderful way.—*Round Town*.

Fashionable surgeons will have a busy time during the next few weeks, as we hear that one leg only is to be all the rage this season. In Bond Street yesterday we saw some very modish things in ivory and bonzoline legs at DOTT AND CARRION'S.—*The Up-to-Date*.

### The Youngest Living Photographic Artist.

IN the *Tatler* of Feb. 22 appears a portrait of the Czarevitch ALEXIS, and, underneath, the statement: "This is the only portrait that has yet been taken of the infant Prince by himself." "The Czar," it is added, "has sanctioned its publication." Parental pride could do no less.

### Another Infant Prodigy.

CARE of elderly FEMALE BABY; near sea.—Addt. in "*Norwood Press*."



### THE SPECTRE THAT WASN'T LAID.

ARTHUR B. "WH-WH-AT A H-H-HORRID THING! I SHALL R-R-RUN AWAY!"

C.B. "I-I-I ONLY W-W-WISH I C-C-COULD!"





## ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

*House of Commons, Monday night.*—  
 "Curious thing in Irish politics, not as far as I know noted, is effect it has upon the hair of the Chief Secretary of the day. I remember when FORSTER undertook the post there was something really truculent about his hair. It operated upon unruly Irish Members almost with severity of a Coercion Act. After a year or two it began to droop, thin out, finally assuming a lost lank look suggestive of having been out all night in the rain. GEORGE TREVELYAN went to Dublin Castle with unbrindled hair; he left it grey-headed. And now here's that young thing, GEORGE WYNDHAM, whitening wisely. A most distressful country, not least for those called upon to govern it."

Thus the MEMBER FOR SARK, moralising in interval of to-night's Debate.

REDMOND *ainé* opened it with amendment to Address nominally raising question of Government of Ireland, actually designed to give his financial supporters in United States and elsewhere a show for their money, the young bloods of his party opportunity of airing their eloquence. What in ordinary circumstances would have been a hollow performance, wearisome by its obvious artificiality, led to one of stormiest scenes witnessed of late in House.

REDMOND having completed delivery of his recital, marred by loss of some



TOO LIVELY TO BE PLEASANT.

*That Inconvenient "Corp."* "Bedad, it'll take ye all y'ur thoine to bhury me!"  
 ("Cannot we bury the episode in oblivion?"—*Mr. Balfour's Speech.*)

pages of the manuscript containing notes of his impromptus, MOORE of North Antrim took the floor. Spokesman of Irish Unionists, he might have been expected to gird at his fellow-countrymen in opposite camp, and defend the representative of the best of all Governments. But you never know where you have an Irishman, even when he comes from Ulster. The loyal Orange man had little to say to his Nationalist brothers clamouring for Home Rule. He turned and rent his own familiar friend, his sometime captain, the Chief Secretary, representative of a Government composed of men who nineteen years ago fought and beat Mr. G., who in their absence would have given Home Rule to Ireland.

House accustomed to hear plain language when Irish Member discourses on Saxon Government. For uncompromising directness, for infusion in voice and manner of deadly implacable hate, South and West Ireland are not in it with Ulster.

Significant episode when GEORGE WYNDHAM rose to reply. His urbane manner, his unfailing consideration of other people, his keen intelligence, his bright speech, have combined to secure for him rare measure of popularity on both sides. His interposition in debate, in whatever circumstances, on whatsoever subject, hitherto the signal for outburst of welcoming cheer. This

afternoon he rose amid dead silence, broken only by his quavering voice.

Not quite two years ago he, standing in same place, pledged British credit to the tune of £100,000,000 sterling to be divided between Irish landlord and tenant. That something like legislation. For a while the gay and gallant GEORGE enjoyed popularity in both Irish camps unknown to predecessors. The Land Purchase Bill of 1903 was avowedly based on that principle of conciliation which NORTH ANTRIM to-night denounced as "wretched, rotten, sickening." At least landlords had their share in its financial advantages. To-day the Chief Secretary is detected in—at least accused of—contemplating further concession, this time solely in the interests of the National Party.

Straightway Ulster springs at his throat.

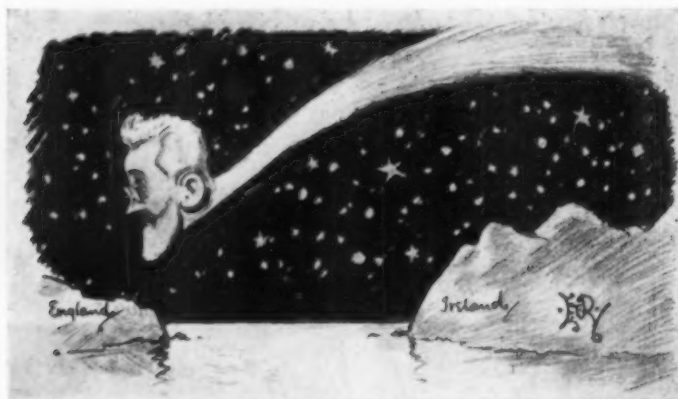
It might be expected in the circumstances that the National Party would rally to his defence. Not a bit of it. They bang him in front whilst their loyal brethren prod him on the flank, what time PRINCE ARTHUR, with head buried in his hands, listens and realises how much sharper than a Free-fooder's tooth is Ulster's ingratitude.

*Business done.*—Ulster in revolt against Unionist Government. Renewal of familiar talk about dying in the ditch; this time, it is GEORGE WYNDHAM who is to suffer the inconvenience.



ULSTER RAMPANT.

"This wretched, rotten, sickening policy of conciliation."  
 (Mr. W. L. M. M-re of North Antrim.)



THE LOSELY METEOR.

"His intervention in Debate, illumining the week."

(Mr. T-m H-ly.)

*Tuesday night.*—PRINCE ARTHUR beginning to have settled convictions that the glow of battle, the sacrifice to patriotism that compels a Minister to strain every nerve to keep his friends in and the other fellows out, may be too dearly bought. Conviction strengthened to-day. Bad enough through these twenty months to struggle with House and public from whom Providence has inscrutably withheld capacity for understanding the plainest words, even when written down on half a sheet of note-paper. To have his Cabinet shattered, his party riven because, to serve his private ends, an esteemed colleague went mad on Protection question, and bit everybody who on this matter retained opinions convincingly preached by him twenty years ago, a little hard.

Through that mill he went last week, coming out of the ordeal still jauntily wearing the "gentleman's anatomical belt" that Cousin HUGH contumeliously insists is really a pair of stays. Reasonable to anticipate a quiet week to follow.

On the contrary things worse than ever. Ulster up in arms and will not lay them down. Nay, NORTH ANTRIM threatens to "call out the Reserves on the third of March." At first, when MOORE in hollow voice, with beetling brow, mentioned this date, Members didn't know what it might portend.

"The Ides of March we have heard of, and we 'beware' accordingly," said PRINCE ARTHUR, who, if occasion arose, would go to the scaffold with a jest on his lips. "But what about the 3rd of that particular month?"

Soothsayer MOORE explained to CÆSAR that on the 3rd prox. (thus do soothsayers talk in these prosaic times) there

is to be a conference of Ulster men to consider situation with special reference to iniquities of His Majesty's Government. On Treasury Bench sit five Ulster Members, leavening the mass with rigid respectability, distrust of Papal aggression, loyalty to the Sovereign who wears a crown handed down by the substantial wraith of WILLIAM III. These are Ulster men first, Ministers after. At the call of the masterful Province they will, instantan, engage a brass band, don the orange scarf, borrow the office poker, and march forth to the assistance of their countrymen, even though in their stride they knock over the Government they have hitherto strengthened and embellished. In my mind's eye, *Horatio*, I see EDWARD HENRY CARSON and HUGH ARNOLD-FORSTER thus issuing forth, the rest, with trumpets also and shawms, following after.

That in the future,—to be precise, on the 3rd prox. aforesaid. Sufficient for to-night are the evils thereof. Standing at the Table in effort to wind up Debate on REDMOND's amendment, PRINCE ARTHUR finds himself the target for rude, incessant, disturbing interruption from jubilant Opposition. In ordinary circumstances this might be borne. It is, *inter alia*, the business of the Opposition to make things uncomfortable for the Leader on the other side. What was lacking was the hearty support of his own men, inspiring, commanding influence, two sessions ago generously forthcoming.

With the Ulster Members in revolt, with "the Reserves" on the Treasury Bench suspected of secretly sharpening knives in the recesses of the Tea-room lavatory, with the long down-trodden Opposition fiercely jubilant, with majority

on a critical vote of confidence run down to 50, the lot of the PRIME MINISTER is not a happy one.

*Business done.*—On Home Rule amendment to Address Ministers saved by a majority of 50 in House of 522 Members.

*Friday night.*—TIM HEALY gone back to Erin, like sensible man bent on minding his own business. His intervention in Debate, illumining the week, was worth an average man's attendance through the Session.

Pretty to see how this Irish Ishmael, unassisted by wealth, birth, or social position, expelled, as he says, from his own party, having no following, commands attention of most critical assembly in the world. When he stood up the benches were almost empty; when he concluded not an inch of space on any, a crowd in the gallery facing him, a throng standing at the Bar, the Chamber resonant with cheers and laughter.

This is the triumph not less of honesty than of genius. TIM spares no man in bitter denunciation of what he thinks is ill-doing to Ireland. He has no axe to grind—unless it be one designed for the decapitation of some five or six of the compatriots amid whom he sits, solitary but dominant. He does not even pay a Saxon assembly the compliment of preparing an oration in order to win its attention or earn its applause. No loss of stray folios of notes would embarrass him. He just talks to the House straight forth, an unpremeditated strain, over the depths of whose pathos and passion flash gleams of mordant wit.

*Business done.*—Still harping on the Address.

#### No first-nighter.

*First Man in the Street.* See the eclipse last night?

*Second Man in the Street.* No. Thought it might be crowded. Put off going till next week.

At the forty-fifth ordinary general meeting of the Brighton Grand Hotel Company, Limited, a shareholder complained that the stock of wines was too large. The Chairman agreed, and said the Board would do its best to reduce the quantity. . . . The retiring directors offered themselves for re-election.

"SEEING STARS."—The "starring" of questions already shows that power is needed to control this branch of Parliamentary procedure. Out of forty questions down for to-morrow forty-three are "starred" for oral reply.—*Irish Times*.





# COWARDICE IN THE FIELD.

Lady Frances Macadam. "THIS WAY, HARRY. YOU FOLLOW ME. I KNOW EVERY YARD OF THE COUNTRY."  
 Captain Harry Brewster (of the Buffs—with a beautiful line of country in front of him). "SORRY, AUNT, BUT I DAREN'T. I'VE LOST ALL MY 'NERVE'!"

## AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.

## CHAPTER II.

As I said before, it must naturally be a nasty jar for any fellow to find himself suddenly reduced, through no fault of his own, to the position of a monkey on a piano-organ. And I don't mind admitting that, for a moment or two, I was regularly flummoxed. After that, oddly enough, I began to see that in some ways it was almost a relief. For one thing, I didn't feel nearly such a fool.

You see, for a man who prides himself on dressing correctly, it's impossible to feel at ease in Pall Mall with nothing on but a plaid tunic fastened up the back with mother-o'-pearl buttons, and a frill round the neck. But, for a monkey, it's quite correct kit—if it isn't actually classy. And I hadn't got to lunch at the Junior Beaufort in it either, which was a let-off.

Another thing: without being what you would call extravagant, I never have been able to live within my income. Consequently, my affairs had got into a regular beastly mess. I was simply up to my neck in money worries of all kinds. Well, I was out of them all now. Nobody would dream of serving me with a writ.

Again, I'd every reason to suppose that the REGGIE BALLMORE of old must have pegged out—or else I shouldn't be where I was. But I was alive at all events—and that's something. Isn't there a proverb about a live monkey being better than a dead policeman? So altogether I bucked up sooner than might have been expected.

I didn't attempt to leave the organ. To tell you the truth, it wouldn't have been any good, as I was attached to the confounded instrument by a stoutish cord and a leather belt round my waist.

Nor yet, though, as we passed down Pall Mall, I met several men I knew, did I hail them and explain the fix I was in. What was the use? The right words wouldn't come: I didn't understand what I said myself, so how could I expect anyone else to? Besides, I'd a sort of feeling that it wouldn't be quite Cricket. I know I shouldn't have cared to be appealed to as an old pal by a monkey on an organ.

No, since that was what I had come down to, it seemed to me that the manly thing to do was to grin and bear it—to play the monkey, in short, for all it was worth. People were always telling me I ought to make a fresh start, and do something for my living. Now perhaps they would be satisfied!

There was just one thing though, that caused me a pang when I remembered it. This change in my mode of life would prevent me from dining at my Aunt SELINA's that evening. She didn't often ask me, and when she did I seldom went—for her parties are, as a rule, devilish dull. But somehow I had been rather looking forward to this particular dinner. My cousin PHYLLIS would be there now—which made all the difference. She only came out last year, and, so I understand, with considerable success. I know I saw her described as "the lovely Miss ADEANE" in the Society journals, and as being present at every smart party of the season. I only met her very occasionally, but she seemed to me no end improved since I remembered her in a pigtail—in fact, she'd grown into an absolute ripper—though perhaps a little bit above herself, inclined to be airified, if you know what I mean.

She hadn't taken much notice of me, so far—seemed indeed to consider I had become rather a piffler. But I'd been hoping that I might sit next to her, perhaps even take her in to dinner that evening. Then I could let her see that there was a more serious side to my character than I chose to show the world. Of course all that was out of the question now.

No matter! I might have been a failure as a man—but, hang it all! with my education and intelligence, any monkey ought to have a fine career before it! Pall Mall—as the couple of idiots with my piano-organ might have known—is a most unsuitable place for a street performance, but, as soon as we were permitted to halt without being moved on, I was determined to show the public that I was a cut above the ordinary professional.

I should have preferred Trafalgar Square as a pitch, but my two ruffians took me up a small lane near the National Gallery, and across Coventry Street into Soho, and I didn't get a chance of displaying my abilities till we stopped in a slum off Wardour Street.

My idea was to surprise the audience by giving them a cake-walk, in which I hoped to make some sensation. But it didn't come off, somehow. It wasn't nervousness exactly—that would have been ridiculous when they were all so young. I fancy the cord hampered me, and my tail kept getting in the way, too—and then the tunes I was expected to dance to! I've noticed that a monkey generally has rather poor luck in the music he's sent out with, and I'll defy anyone to cakewalk to "Jerusalem" or "Killarney" and put any kind of "go" into it.

So I gave it up, and just jumped about anyhow, accompanying myself on the tambourine. But the bally tambourine had two of the jingling thingummies missing and wouldn't keep time. I don't believe I got much more music out of it than an ordinary monkey would have, I really don't.

However, my chance came presently. One of the organ Johnnies handed me up a little wooden musket. "What-oh!" I said to myself. "Now I'll open their eyes!" For of course you can't be in a Volunteer corps, even for a short time, without knowing more about the manual exercise than your average monkey.

I had got rustier in the drill than I thought, and besides it was a rotten little rifle to handle when you're so long in the arms, and haven't learnt to control them completely. Still, it was a fairly creditable performance and improved with practice, though quite thrown away on such audiences as I had.

Not that I was a failure—don't imagine that for a moment. I should think I took at least thirteen halfpence in the first ten minutes—more than I had ever earned before in all my life! But it went rather against the grain to take the money—especially from some poor little beggar who obviously belonged to quite the lower orders. I should like to have said, "Don't you be a young ass—run away and spend your halfpenny on sweets instead of squandering it on these lazy bouncers!" But whenever I did reject a copper I got a tug at the belt that nearly cut me in two.

I should say we gave a *matinée* that afternoon in every street in Soho. I was getting quite knocked up, for I had had no lunch. At least I don't call half a cracknel biscuit and the over-ripe end of a banana "lunch" myself. MOSTY would have done me to rights at the Junior Beaufort.

We stopped at last outside a small public just off Oxford Street, and my men went inside for refreshment. They might have thought of sending me out a whisky-and-soda—but not *they*! So I sat on the top of the piano in the sunshine, keeping a wary eye on my tail, which some of the little brutes of children thought it funny to pull.

When we moved off again in the direction of the Marble Arch, I felt more cheerful. Thank Heaven! we had got back into a civilised region again. There would be people there capable of appreciating real talent when they saw it. Suppose—only suppose—some music-hall manager happened to be in the crowd and offered me an engagement? Why not? I ought to be able to wear evening clothes, order a little dinner, and smoke a cigar on the stage better than a bally Chimpanzee who'd never done the real thing in any kind of society!

Great Scot! I might be earning my hundred quid a week before long—which I should never have done as REGGIE BALLIMORE. And I'd always had a hankering after the stage, and should have gone on it long before, if it didn't cut into one's evenings so.

I was still indulging these golden dreams when I was brought up with a round turn. . . . There was a victoria standing outside a glove and fan shop we were coming to, and on the box I recognised TEMBRIDGE, my aunt's coachman. And in the carriage, as I saw when our respective vehicles were alongside, sat my cousin PHYLLIS, looking simply ripping! Upon my word, I didn't quite know *what* to do. I knew she must have seen me, for she smiled in that perfectly fetching way she has. My hand flew to my hat instinctively, but the infernal elastic made it fly back and catch me on the ear. Then, recollecting myself, I gave what I am afraid was a rather sketchy rendering of the military salute, and at that same instant my aunt came out of the fan and glove shop, followed by an assistant with parcels. I felt most beastly awkward—I all but lost my head—and wished more than ever that the frill round my neck had been a trifle cleaner.

But *something* had to be done, and, as luck would have it, I was still carrying the little wooden musket. So, as my aunt was about to step into the carriage, I presented arms.

It was a jolly decent "present," too—though I say it myself! F. A.

#### COINCIDENCES.

[The following interesting experiences of students of coincidence are placed by Mr. Punch at the disposal of Professor LIMHOUSE of the Petersen University, Wisconsin, who is stated to be preparing a work on this fascinating study.]

A CHEMIST's assistant at Bolton records a very curious experience. He was fishing in a neighbouring stream during a summer holiday in 1893. After some hours of failure he chanced to hook a gudgeon. After playing the fish for some time until it was thoroughly exhausted, he made an effort to pull it from the water, but on his inadvertently jerking the line the fish escaped. In 1904 the angler was again at this spot, on the very same day of the year—not the same date precisely, but the same day, the first Monday in August—and again,

after a disappointing interval of inactivity, he succeeded in hooking a gudgeon. This time he safely landed it and bore it back to Bolton in triumph as an illustration, not only of his own prowess, but of this freakish law of repeated history which we call coincidence. The fish, carefully stuffed, is now an honoured ornament on the walls of the canteen of the local society for the prosecution of psychical research.

A Cambridgeshire Vicar writes:—"I had just come this morning to the third head of my discourse when a starling, who had hitherto remained *perdu* among the rafters, flew down among the congregation and completely dis-

six weeks ago, as I was walking along Kensington High Street on my way to the White Sale at Messrs. TORRY AND DEMS, the pavement being very crowded, a perambulator which was being wheeled by a nursemaid ran over my right foot, causing me serious pain, as I had on a new pair of boots. Controlling my temper as well as I could, I said, 'My good girl, do look where you are coming to!' About a fortnight, or it might have been three weeks later, I was shopping in High Street, not more than a hundred yards from where my accident occurred, when, as I was coming out of a chemist's with a small bottle of ammoniated quinine in my hand, I saw a bicyclist,

riding close to the kerb, run into an elderly gentleman who was about to cross the street. You can imagine my surprise when the gentleman, who was seriously shaken, contented himself by saying, 'My good Sir, do look where you are coming to!'"

A retired civil servant writes from Gipsy Hill:—"As I was leaving the Crystal Palace after an afternoon performance of the pantomime to which I had taken my two youngest children, I was accosted by a respectable young man, evidently in the direst destitution, who begged me to help him to pay his railway fare to Southampton, where he had been promised work in a bakery by his stepfather. He produced a batch of testimonials which spoke in the highest terms of his honesty and sobriety, so I handed him half a sovereign, which he promised to repay on his arrival. A month later I went to a *matinée* at the Crystal Palace, and as I came out, precisely at the same spot



Sergeant (Irish Guards). "SURE AN' YOU, A FUTURE FIELD MARSHAL, CAN DO BETTER THAN SPELL S-T-I-F-I-C-Y-T FOR 'CERTIFICATE'?"  
Drummer Boy (smart little Cockney, emphatically). "NOBODY COULDN'T SPELL WITH THIS PEN, SIR!"

organised attention for some minutes until the verger succeeded in catching it in one of the offertory bags. The curious thing is that at the precise moment when the interruption occurred I was likening the life of man to the flight of an eagle."

A Lady who prefers to remain nameless writes from Ladbroke Grove:—"A really extraordinary coincidence occurred last week. I was dining with a party of friends at a London restaurant when we were asked by the manager to give him the initials of our Christian names in order that the *chef* might mould an ice into the form of the letters. We did so, and—will you believe it?—all the guests had names beginning with A except three."

A Kensington Matron writes:—"Some

the same man greeted me with precisely the same story. In short the coincidence would have been absolutely complete only that on the second occasion my children were not with me, and that when I said to him, 'You told me that story a month ago and I gave you half a sovereign,' he simply bolted off, and I have never seen him since. I forgot to mention that the name of his stepfather at Southampton was HENDERSON, which was my wife's mother's maiden name, which made the coincidence even more surprising."

FOUNDATION OF A CHAIR OF FRENCH FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL.—It is proposed that the occupant of this chair shall be always respectfully entitled *Père La Chaise*.



## OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

IN undertaking to write *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava* (JOHN MURRAY), SIR ALFRED LYALL assumed a task difficult from the very richness of the ore in the mine he worked. There are few men in English history who have worked through so busy and varied a public life as that Lord DUFFERIN adorned. A peer whilst yet a school-boy, master of a rich estate, he was surrounded by temptations to which many born to similar circumstances have succumbed. From childhood, guided and counselled by a mother whose companionship was the

most precious of his privileges, he kept the path of honour and self-respect. His successive public services are familiar to the world, being indeed chapters of English history. Whether Governor-General in Canada, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, on special mission in Egypt, Viceroy of India, Ambassador at Rome and at Paris, he was always topside, holding the position without treading on other people's toes. A literary man, as testified by the classic *Letters from High Latitudes*, he was a public speaker whose glowing periods habitually reached the height of oratory. He was that rare combination, a brilliant yet a lovable man. Wherever he went, whatever might be his mission, he, whilst uncompromisingly performing it, achieved its end in a manner that endeared him even to the worsted adversary. He was, perhaps, the only man from whom the present SULTAN heard the truth about himself and his ways of doing business. Yet when Lord DUFFERIN left Constantinople on his Egyptian mission during the ARABI revolt ABDUL HAMID almost shed tears and longed for his return. That such a career, trodden with unfailingly lofty step, should have ended in sordid tragedy, is one of the most pathetic things my Baronite knows in Biography. When all is remembered, it is curious to read in a letter describing his visit to America, written during his Canadian administration, an account of a play he saw in New York. "The principal character," he writes, "was well acted, typifying the native speculator who ruins himself and his friends several times over by his magnificent operations." The two volumes through which the story runs form a masterpiece of biographical art. The writer never obtrudes his own personality, devoting sound judgment and consummate skill to moulding in just proportion the figure and lineaments of his subject.

*The Root*, by ORME AGNUS (WARD, LOCK & Co.), is a powerfully-written novel of a Zolaesque type, though quite free from anything that could be considered as an approach to the objectionable characteristics of the French novelist's work. The Root means "the root of all evil," which in this instance is a sum of money that has no existence save in the imagination of some of the more covetous, artfully scheming, and sordid peasantry of a West Country village. The reader, as he be a thorough Londoner, will have to face the difficulties presented by the West Country dialect in which all the conversation is written. Yet the bold lector who, not being a Northerner, has mastered the crackjaw complications in dialogue of *A Window in Thrums*, and *The Stickit Minister*, or, knowing nothing whatever of the jargon of the plantation negro, has laboriously familiarised himself with the queer sentences and odd expressions used by *Uncle Remus*, the bold lector, I say, whose patience has triumphed over the foregoing difficulties, will find the Dorset dialect a mere little holiday task by comparison. The characters are admirably drawn, and though the story is so slight and simple that it can scarcely be dignified by the

name of plot yet the reader's curiosity is sufficiently aroused and the interest is sustained to the end.

MESSRS. DENT have added *Venice* to their series of guides to mediæval towns. The letterpress is contributed by Mr. THOMAS OKEY, and the illustrations by Miss NELLIE ERICHSON. Both are admirable. Whilst the work is excellent for the ordinary purposes of a guide book, taking the reader by the hand and leading him with sympathetic guidance through the main points of interest in the city that loomed large in Europe through eleven centuries, fully one half of the volume is devoted to concise but comprehensive history of its people. Indispensable to those about to visit Venice, it will as a work of literature be found interesting to those who, like my Baronite, stay at home. Further recommendation is that, though running to 433 pages of legible type, the book is printed on a special paper that suits it for the pocket.

The Baron has great pleasure in recommending to all and sundry *The Vacillations of Hazel*, by MABEL BARNES-GRUNDY (ARROWSMITH). There is in this story an originality of idea and a freshness of treatment that will rivet the attention of the most jaded novel-reader. It would be perfect were not *Miss Hazel's naiveté* too persistently exploited. The characters are well drawn, especially those of the old gardener *Sammy*, and of the aunt with her own sad experience of life.

Heart and soul was the late Mr. FREDERIC KITTON in his most interesting and absolutely exhaustive work on *The Dickens Country* (A. & C. BLACK). All that he wrote about our great novelist was to him a labour of love; nor must any one who takes up this book fail to read the preface admirably written by Mr. ARTHUR WAUGH. Personally the Baron wishes that KITTON could have had JOHN FORSTER's opportunities, that he could have been the companion of DICKENS, and could have been to him as BOSWELL was to JOHNSON. On the other hand the world has the benefit of the work both of FORSTER, the contemporary biographer, and of the much younger man who was, at a distance of time, the devoted worshipper of CHARLES DICKENS. What Mr. KITTON did not know concerning the literary life and labour of CHARLES DICKENS is not worth knowing. In one respect, like *Mr. Dick*, he is always setting us right and demolishing legends which have grown up about Dickensian characters and localities. He collects evidence from all sources, weighs it carefully, and pronounces upon it judiciously. One among many noteworthy instances of this occurs in the case of the *Cheeryble Brothers*, those amiable philanthropists dear to every reader of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Although DICKENS himself alludes to the originals of these brothers in his preface to *Nicholas Nickleby*, yet it was for a long time a very general impression that their prototypes were the heads of a great commercial house in London, whereas, as it now appears, they were, out of all question, WILLIAM and DANIEL GRANT, Merchants of Ramsbottom and Manchester, with whom the novelist declared he had "never exchanged any communication in his life." Then again—but hold, enough!—for if the Baron allows himself to be lured into talking of Dickensian matters, the premises of his Booking-Office would have to be considerably enlarged. So once more he strongly recommends to all his readers the immediate acquisition of KITTON's latest and, alas! his last work, entitled *The Dickens Country*.

